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Simple House Repairs

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Now HE-488

SIMPLE HOUSE REPAIRS

1. TOOLS AND SUPPLIES FOR SIMPLE HOUSEHOLD REPAIR. Without good tools few people can do acceptable repair jobs.

A. Selection: Good tools are a good investment.

1. Every homemaker's tool kit should include:

- Claw hammer - 1, with a 12 to 16 ounce head, curved claw, head should toe in slightly toward handle.
- Screw drivers - 1 screw driver with a 3/16 inch blade and 1 with a 5/16 inch blade, both 8 inches long.
- Pliers - 1 pair, slip joint pliers, 6 inches long.
- Wrench - 1, six inch crescent wrench.
- File - 6 or 8 inch general purpose file.

2. Other tools needed in household:

- Cross-cut hand saw - 1, 20 inches long with 8 or 10 points per inch.
- Square - 1, all metal, 24 inch blade (long arm) and 16 to 18 inch tongue (short arm)
- Folding rule or steel tape.
- Tack hammer - 1, 4 ounce.
- Pliers - 1, sheep nosed, for close, small work.
- Tinner's snips - 1, 10 or 12 inches long.
- Trowel - small trowel for patching plaster.
- Putty knife - 1, with flexible blade 1 1/2 inches wide.
- Nail set - 1, with 1/16 inch tip.
- Wrench - 1, pipe wrench to be used only on unfinished pipes.

3. Other supplies:

- a. Sandpaper - No. 1, No. 1/2 and No. 2-0 for general household use. Comes in sheets 9/11 inches.

- b. Nails:

- For general repair jobs use either common or box nails: 8 penny; 6 penny; 4 penny.
- For trim or cabinet work use finishing or brad type nail. Has a very small head that can be driven below surface of wood with a nail set.

- c. Screws - Sizes for general household use:

3/4 inch (length)	No. 6 (diam. of shank)	flat head	bright
1 "	No. 8 "	" "	" "
1 "	No. 8 "	" "	round head blue
1 1/4 "	No. 8 "	" "	" "

- d. Tacks - for window screens, large headed, size 6 ounce or larger.

- e. Mending plates - corner plates for window screens each side 1 1/2 inches long and 3/8 inches wide.
- f. Corrugated metal fasteners - for window screens, 1 inch long and 3/8 inch wide.
- g. Glazier's points - triangular pieces of sheet metal 5/16 to 3/8 inch on a side, used to hold window glass in place.

B. Use of tools.

1. Hammer:

- For starting a nail or tacking, grasp hammer close under head when light tap is needed.
- For long strokes grasp end of handle.
- To drive a nail in a straight line the hand holding the hammer must be on a level with nail head as it is driven.
- Hold nail close under head when starting to avoid mashed fingers.
- To pull a nail place a cloth, cardboard or block of wood under the head of the hammer to prevent damage to wood or finish.

2. Screw driver:

- Hold screw driver so working point is somewhere between shoulders and hips.
- Set the screw driver squarely in head of screw and apply just enough pressure to keep it from jumping out.
- To start a screw straight, first drive a nail part way into wood, then twist to make hole larger.
- To make screw turn more easily rub threads with soap or paraffin.
- Flat head screws are countersunk in wood. Round head screws are not.
- Turn screws (nuts and bolts) right to tighten, left to loosen.

3. Pliers - "Pliers are mechanical fingers for tight holding."

- slip joint pliers
- Sheep nosed pliers

4. Wrench - use to hold or turn nuts and bolts. Pliers should never be used for this purpose. They may damage corners.

- Crescent wrench for general use.
- Lever-jaw wrench for many household jobs; doubles for pipe wrench or portable vice.

5. Cross-cut hand saw:

- Mark line to be cut with a square.
- Hold saw across board with toothed edge at a 45 degree angle to board.
- Hold board with other hand and guide saw by pressing knuckle of thumb against side of saw.
- Bring blade back toward you a few times to make a start, then saw back and forth.
- Take long even strokes. Avoid short jerky ones.
- Keep sides of saw at right angles with top of board.

6. Square - Used to mark lines on boards for sawing and for "squaring" right angle joints.

SIMPLE HOUSE REPAIRS

SIMPLE REPAIRS FOR FLOORS, DOORS, WINDOWS.

I. Simple Repair of floors and stairs.

A. Creaking floor boards on stairways.

1. In floors, if joints are exposed underneath, wooden shingle wedges may be driven between subflooring and joints where creaking occurs.
2. In stairs, if underside is exposed, shingle wedges may be driven between tread and stringer of steps that creak.
3. If underside of floor is not exposed, drive pairs of finishing nails at opposite angles, down through edges of floor boards, taking care to avoid hammer dents.
--Drive heads of nails below surface of floor boards with nail set.
--Fill nail holes with putty or plastic wood. Sand smooth when dry.
4. If underside of stairs is not exposed drive finishing nails through top of tread into edge of riser and into stringers. Drive heads of nails below surface of floor with nail set and fill holes with putty or plastic wood.

B. Uneven floor boards may be sanded or scraped to make the surface even. Be sure to check and correct any sagging foundations or improperly supported floors. Levelling should be done first.

C. Filling cracks and small holes in floors:

1. Plastic wood (may be bought in various colors). Round up above crack when applying to allow for shrinkage when dry. Sand off excess.
2. Sawdust and ordinary glue may be mixed to form a paste. Match to wood by using sawdust from same wood. It shrinks when dry.
3. Glazing compound - use to fill cracks between plaster walls and wood-work. Does not become hard and fall out like putty. Before using glazing compound on porous surfaces coat surface with shellac, linseed oil or white lead.

II. Simple repair of doors. (First, Be sure foundation is level, or at least steady and secure.)

A. A door that squeaks:

- Put a drop of sewing machine oil at top of hinge, swing door back and forth to work oil into hinge. Repeat until squeak stops.

B. A door that rattles:

- A door rattles when latch fits loosely in strike plate (slotted metal piece screwed to door frame). Flat side of latch should fit snugly against strike plate when door is closed and door should not move back and forth.
- Sometimes the rattle can be temporarily stopped by stretching a heavy rubber band around the two knobs, or stretching the rubber band around the flat side of latch and knob on opposite side of door.
- Remove screws and strike plate from door frame. To mark position of latch fasten a piece of white paper with scotch tape over part of door frame covered by strike plate. Hold piece of carbon paper over white paper with carbon side next to paper. Close door with latch in, hold door tightly against door jam, release latch enough to strike carbon paper. Draw latch in again

and open door. Position of latch is marked on white paper. With a pencil mark position of latch on door frame by punching point through white paper at top and bottom of latch mark. Fill old screw holes with plastic wood. When set, replace strike plate so that outside edge of latch slot fits snugly against flat side of latch when door is closed.

C. Loose door handle:

--Remove one knob after loosening the small screw on shaft. Put a metal washer or ring of wire around shaft, replace knob and screw. In case of a very loose handle more than one washer or wire ring may be needed.

D. Loose hinges:

--Rattling, sagging or sticking may be caused by loose hinges. Try tightening hinge screws. If this does not work, remove screws one by one, fill screw hole with plastic wood, or small sticks or matches wet with glue, or plug hole with steel wool. Reset each screw. The screws may be replaced by longer screws.

E. Door that sticks or binds:

--The spot that binds can usually be located by slowly closing and opening the door, paying attention to just where binding takes place. Sandpaper spot that sticks. A piece of sandpaper may be held over surface of door frame where binding occurs. With sand side toward edge of door, open and close door, open and close door several times over sandpaper. In some extreme cases sanding may not be enough. A carpenter should be called to correct the difficulty by planing the door edge.

F. Door fails to latch:

--If latch seems to stick, put a few drops of oil on it and move in and out trying the knob. Wipe off excess oil.
--If latch does not catch in latch plate, remove latch plate and place a thin strip of wood on door frame where latch plate fits. Replace latch plate. This method will take care of a narrow gap.
--If the gap is wide between the door and door frame and tends to extend from top to bottom of door, a strip needs to be fitted on frame the full length of door. A carpenter should make this type of repair.
--If latch strikes latch plate, unscrew plate and replace it, centering it with the face of the latch.

III. Simple repair of windows:

A. Window sash:

1. A window sash that sticks:

--When weather is dry, rub paraffin or paste floor wax along length of groove in which sash runs and on sash cord. If sash cord is snapped it sometimes loosens window sash.
--If groove in which window runs is too narrow, move sash up, place a block against the outer edge of stop and pound it inward. If this is not enough remove stop and reset it.
--If it is hardened paint that keeps window from moving, work blade of old knife up and down in crack between sash and stop. If outside of window can be reached, run knife blade between sash and parting strip on outside. The sash may be tapped lightly with hammer to help loosen it.

Strike top of frame near sides, not in the middle. If this does not release it, a block of wood may be moved up and down the sides of the frame, tapping it lightly with the hammer each time it is moved. Be careful not to loosen putty when tapping window sash. Run a knife blade along crack between upper and lower sashes.

2. A window sash that rattles:

--If lower sash rattles, remove stop on inside of window. Reset a little closer to sash allowing just enough space for sash to run up and down easily. The lower end of stop should be close enough to sash to cause slight binding when sash is closed. If upper sash rattles, drive a small wooden wedge between sash and parting strip.

3. Small window panes that rattle may be reset or small broken panes replaced:

--If window panes rattle, putty around panes has dried, loosened or fallen out. Replace the putty by method below.

--If pane is broken, first remove all broken glass from window sash before removing putty and glazier's points. If resetting a loose pane, first remove all putty and glazier's points before pane can be removed. If putty is very hard use putty remover. Apply remover, let stand 12 hours, then remove it along with old putty. Scrape wood clean where pane fits. Apply a coat of shellac, linseed oil or white lead to the wood; over priming coat apply a thin layer of putty, and into it press window pane. Replace glazier's points. Push them into wood, flat side snug against pane, tap smartly with tack hammer. Apply putty with putty knife pressing it at an angle. Smooth it off, clean away excess oil or shellac and let putty dry. Paint putty to match outside of window.

4. Broken sash cord:

--Repairing a broken sash cord requires removing window sash. It had best be done by a carpenter.

B. Roller window shades:

1. If shade spring is unwound, put shade in place and roll down about 3 feet, take roller out and roll shade up by hand. If this does not wind spring enough, repeat process until shade rolls up and down easily.

2. If shade is wound too tight, remove shade from window, unwind about a foot by hand, replace shade and roll up. If the spring is still too tight, repeat process until the shade rolls up and down easily.

3. If spring is broken buy a new shade roller.

4. Sometimes threads fray out along side of shade which wind around end of roller. This may be cause of shade not operating properly. Remove shade and unwrap threads from ends. Trim loose threads from side of shade. Replace shade.

5. Torn or damaged shade hem. Unroll shade on large table or floor. Remove tacks holding shade to roller - use screw driver or tack puller. Cut off old hem and damaged section. Reverse ends of shade cloth. Make new hem. Use 1/4" stitches on machine. (loosen tensions). Retack shade cloth to roller. Set tacks in new holes near old holes. Be careful to use same size tack; longer ones would prevent spring from operating.

C. Window screens:

1. To mend holes in screen:

- "Square up" hole.
- To Flatten, mash loose strands about hole between two wood blocks.
- Cut patch from matching screen wire, 1 1/2 inches larger to all four sides than hole.
- Unravel edges of patch, about 6 strands on each side.
- Bend unravelled ends at right angles to patch, over edge of wood block.
- Place patch over hole, force unravelled ends through mesh of screen, turn toward hole in screen and flatten between two blocks of wood.

2. To strengthen loosened joints in wood frames:

- Remove door before attempting repairs. Lay it firmly on "gig" or across a pair of "saw horses".
- Fasten corner mending plates with screws at corners on outside of frame.
- If joint is opened up it may be pulled together and squared by use of corrugated steel fasteners.
- If section of frame is broken, it is necessary to replace with a new section. Entire frame may need replacing. These jobs are for carpenter.

3. To replace screen wire:

- Remove small molding from around edge of screen. Be careful not to break it. Try to pull the nails with the molding. The molding is used to cover the tacks and edge of screen wire.
- Remove tacks or staples holding screen wire. A screw driver may be used for this purpose or a tack puller.
- After nails, tacks and screen wire are removed, clean off any rust or roughness from edge of frame.
- Trim screen wire or vinyl plastic insect screen fabric to fit frame. If screen is too wide, trim off on one side only. Allow 1/2 to 3/4 inch lap on both sides of frame.
- Trim one end square.
- Lay screen fabric on frame, squared end at top. Tack this end to frame. Place tacks about three inches apart.
- Pull screen fabric tightly at opposite end of frame, being careful that overlapping edges are evenly divided. Place one tack in center of screen fabric. Tack from center tack toward each edge.
- Tack one side of the screen fabric. (If one side has been trimmed tack it first). Place one tack in center of side then tack from center tack toward each edge.
- Tack other side in same manner being sure to pull screen fabric tightly.
- Trim excess screen fabric from bottom end of frame with tin snippers or sharp knife.
- Replace molding over edge of screen fabric and tack.

Recognition: These two lessons are based upon material prepared by Olivia C. Meyer, Home Management Specialist, Michigan State College, East Lansing.

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